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Letter dated 14 August 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith identical letters addressed to His Excellency Mr. Fuad Siniora, Prime Minister of the Lebanese Republic, and His Excellency Mr. Nabih Berri, Speaker of Parliament of the Lebanese Republic, from His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, dated 12 August 2006, concerning the explanation of vote before the vote of the State of Qatar on Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), adopted on 11 August 2006 (see annex).

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 14 August 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith an explanation of vote of the delegation of the State of Qatar at the meeting of the Security Council concerning the situation in the Middle East held in New York on 11 August 2006.

As agreed between us by telephone and after bringing the matter to the attention of the delegations of France and the United States of America and informing them that this explanation was in accordance with your own wishes, and that I would read it to the members of the Security Council before the vote on the resolution on the situation in the Middle East, the explanation was read out before the vote, followed by a vote in favour of the resolution, as agreed upon between us.

(*Signed*) Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr **Al-Thani**
First Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic]

Explanation of vote of the delegation of the State of Qatar made by His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the meeting of the Security Council on the adoption of the draft resolution on the situation in the Middle East, New York, 11 August 2006

At the outset, I would like to thank the delegations of France and the United States for their recent efforts to improve the language of the draft resolution submitted by them to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East.

While thanking them for taking into consideration some of the important points that we have raised regarding the substance of the draft resolution, I reaffirm our position that, for the sake of stopping the bloodshed of innocents, the Security Council should have adopted a resolution providing for an immediate ceasefire from the very first day of the current hostilities and should have dealt with other questions subsequently.

However, that conviction does not necessarily indicate our satisfaction with the adoption of a draft resolution that lacks balance and overlooks the accumulated, complicated historical, social and geopolitical factors that have culminated in the current situation in the region. The draft resolution fails to adequately take into consideration the interests, unity, stability and territorial integrity of Lebanon. Therefore, we still have some comments regarding the draft resolution.

The draft resolution does not clearly and explicitly address the horrors of destruction caused by the Israeli aggression against innocent civilians and the Lebanese infrastructure. Moreover, it does not clearly spell out Israel's legal and humanitarian responsibility for that destruction or address in a balanced manner the question of the Lebanese prisoners, detainees and abducted persons in Israeli prisons, despite the fact that the exchange of prisoners and detainees is the logical and realistic way to settle this question.

Nevertheless, we have accepted the draft resolution in its present form in order to stop the bloodshed of innocents and to spare Lebanon and the region further horror and destruction.

It is our understanding that, once the draft resolution is adopted, it obligates both parties to halt hostilities and provides for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, and that any breaches committed between the end of hostilities and the achievement of withdrawal and a ceasefire will be governed by the April Understanding of 1996. In addition, the draft resolution will lead to the reopening of the Lebanese ports and airports and the return of the displaced persons to their homes immediately upon its adoption. It is also our understanding that the draft resolution assigns sole responsibility to the Lebanese Government for dealing with the armed phenomena in the South and that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani river is subject to the exclusive control of the Lebanese Government.

We welcome the fact that the draft resolution is limited to augmenting the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), that its mandate will continue to be subject to the provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter, and that, as I have been assured by the sponsors of the draft, any reference to international forces in the draft resolution means UNIFIL. On this occasion, we call upon the contributing States or those States that intend to contribute to UNIFIL to dispatch their forces promptly.

Furthermore, it is our understanding that the Secretary-General will urgently take all the necessary measures to settle the question of the Sheba'a farms in accordance with the provisions of the seven-point plan endorsed by the Lebanese Government in that regard. We are convinced that it is still possible for the Council to play an effective and substantive role in settling this crisis. We will work with peace-loving States in following up this question in the interest of security and stability in Lebanon.

I would like to single out paragraph 18 of the draft resolution, which stresses the need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Failure to deal effectively and objectively with this crisis and its root causes has led to a great deal of turbulence and tension in the region, and this has manifested itself in the events unfolding in Lebanon and in Palestine. We have all witnessed — and, regrettably, continue to witness — the continued aggression against Gaza and its inhabitants.

I wish particularly to inform the Council that the Council of the League of Arab States has unanimously adopted a decision to resubmit the question of the Arab-Israeli conflict to the Security Council, now that everyone has recognized the failure of the peace process in its present form. All of the Arab States will submit an official request for the convening of a high-level meeting of the Security Council next September in order to agree on a new track towards the establishment of a just peace in the region within a set time frame.

The Security Council bears a major responsibility towards millions in the region whose lives and future are threatened by the conflict, which is turning their lives into an inferno. The Council must discharge that responsibility effectively, justly and fully.